

Benton Conservation District Five Year Plan 2005 - 2010

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Organization

A political subdivision of the State of Washington – authorities, powers and structure contained in RCW 89.08.

Function

To take available technical, financial and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land manager with conservation of soil, water and related natural resources.

We Serve & Why

To facilitate responsible stewardship of the land and its resources to the residents of our county/district.

Mission of the Benton Conservation District

The Mission of the Benton Conservation District is to facilitate responsible stewardship of the land and resources for the residents of Benton County through the application and administration of various volunteer and cooperative partnership programs using all available funding sources.

Values of the Benton Conservation District

Conservation of all natural resources

Partnerships

Open Communication

Integrity

Public awareness of our goals and objectives

Voluntary Cooperation

Economic Viability

Information Sharing

Wise land use

Professionalism

Identified Natural Resource Priorities & Goals

1) Air Quality 2) Wildlife Habitat

3) Public Access / Open Spaces5) Urban Interface4) Water Quality Issues6) Water Quantity Issues

7) District Operations 8) Education

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1) Air Quality

Goal #1: By February of 2010, the air quality in Benton County will be incompliance 90% of the time.

Strategies: Identify the most critical areas for wind erosion.

Strategies: Establishing a base line data for the area.

Strategies: Identify methods of erosion control

Action: Establish a technical advisory group

Action: Establish a buffer along SR 221

Action: Secure funding

Action: Staff working with Agency Partners in developing methods of erosion control.

2) Wildlife

Goal #1: By 2010, there will be noticeable and demonstrable improvements in available fish and wildlife habitat within the District.

Strategies: Establish a baseline map of habitat types and conditions

Strategies: Identify the most critical areas for fish and/or wildlife habitat restorations

Strategies: Work to learn, test, and implement cost effective habitat improvement methods

Strategies: Identify current high quality habitat areas, and work with landowners, government agencies, and non-

governmental organizations to preserve and protect these areas.

Action: Increase staff capabilities in habitat improvement methods and GIS applications

Action: Use GIS with aerial photography or remote sensing to identify high quality habitat areas and critical areas in need of restoration

Action: Improve riparian habitats along the Yakima River and Snipes, Spring and Glad and Amon creeks.

Action: Build partnerships with governmental agencies and NGOs for funding and in-kind contributions to support habitat restoration and improvement

Action: Work with agency partners to develop efficient restoration techniques

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3) Public Access / Open Spaces

Goal #1: By 2010, the Benton Conservation District will assist various groups/public to obtain two additional access points to the Yakima River for recreational use.

Strategies: Identify likely properties for access to the Yakima River

Strategies: Identify user groups, interested public and relevant agencies

Strategies: Identify types of use

Action: Establish a technical advisory group composed of public and agency personnel

Action: Secure funding for the purchase and management of Public access and open spaces

Action: Staff working with Agency Partners to develop long-term management strategies

4) Water Quality

Goal #1: By 2010, the water quality of the river and streams in Benton County will have shown continual improvement in terms of DOE evaluation standards.

Strategies: Identify the rivers and streams that do not meet the DOE water quality standards.

Strategies: Establish a baseline data for these streams and rivers.

Strategies: Identify methods to bring these rivers and streams into compliance

Action: Work to secure funding to monitor and improve the water quality in those streams and rivers that are of concern.

Action: Assess local stream and river bank activities that could impact water quality and work with the landowners to implement water quality improvement practices.

Action: Staff working with Agency Partners in researching and developing methods of river and stream water quality improvement.

5) URBAN INTERFACE

Goal: By February of 2010, there will be five programs offered to enhance natural resource conservation is Benton County

Strategies: Provide a positive alternative to certain environmental urban myths

Strategies: Bring a balance to information for the public

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Strategies: Work with other organizations and public agencies to protect and conserve the land while allowing farming to continue

Action: Publish an on-line newsletter quarterly

Action: Establish "talking points papers" that attempt to debunk environmental myths

Action: Establish partnerships with urban organizations that promote conservation of natural resources

Action: Evaluate other Conservation District's programs for consideration in Benton County to enhance rural and urban interface

Action: Evaluate other urban conservation practices, such as Xeriscaping and urban nutrient management.

6) WATER QUANTITY

Goal #1: By February of 2010, we will increase water conservation practices throughout the county to show a 10% improvement in the amount of water saved, which therefore would remain in the stream and rivers of the county.

Strategies: Identify water conservation practices that assist agricultural water users.

Strategies: Identify water conservation practices that assist small farm and urban water users.

Action: Work to secure funding to implement water conservation practices throughout the county.

Action: Assist county residents with implementation of water conservation practices through both technical assistance as well as cost share programs.

Action: Work with Agency Partners in researching and developing improved methods of water conservation practices such as innovative irrigation implementation, control and scheduling.

Action: Assist county residents with knowledge and implementation of Xeriscaping techniques to reduce irrigation demands.

7) DISTRICT OPERATIONS

Goal: By February of 2010, establish local funding mechanisms, which will create a stable funding source.

Strategies: Establish a 10 year Assessment system with local legislative authority Strategies: Establish rental income through acquisition of land and/or buildings Strategies: Support the expanded use of Benton Conservation Association

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Action: Implementation of RCW 89.08.400 to create an assessment.

Action: Identify quality lessees for long term growth

Action: Create staffing that produces a constant income/revenue flow

8) EDUCATION

Goal: By February 2010, there will be three educational programs offered as part of the public education process to enhance learning about natural resource conservation in Benton County.

Strategies: Evaluate existing programs like "Salmon in the Classroom"

Strategies: Evaluate and implement successful programs utilized by other agencies (Example. . . "Provider Pals", "Water on Wheels")

Strategies: Build understanding between urban youth and rural resource providers

Action: Secure financial resources so that human resources can provide desired results

Action: Promote resource industries to help get their message heard

Action: Enhance existing Web Site as a means of providing electronic educational tools

Trends Impacting Conservation

- Decrease Funding
- Funding Sources
- Developing Partnerships
- ❖ Population Growth and Increase uses of resources available
- Increased Government Regulations
- Air Quality Concerns
- Increased Education and Public Awareness
- Decrease of Habitat
- Decrease of Public Access

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Resource and Data

Currently there is a need for basic information on resources and data. The District has equipment that needs to be put in database for fixed assets. There is a need for a policy from the Board to establish this process. Since the move from the WSU Extension Center in Prosser, there is a need to organize information (handouts, literature, etc) in a public display.

Equipment

Tagged Fix Assets (greater than \$500)
Office Equipment List
Field Equipment List
Laboratory List

A library of both electronic and hard copy information needs to be organized.

Library

Public Information
Research Information
Current Programs
Electronic Information and Hard Copy

It is anticipated that when the District moves to its new location in late 2005, space will be available to create a library. Some thought should go into this planned move that will provide for a library.

Staffing Needs

I believe the 5-year plan can be accomplished with the 4-person staff we had prior to reducing the staff due to budget constraints, with the following exceptions;

- 1. A part-time person to assist the Information & Education Coordinator during the Salmon in the Classroom project (September to May) and to implement any other educational programs the District would like to make available to the schools.
- 2. We will possibly need to hire an additional staff person part-time to assist with water quality data collection if/when more projects are added.

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The staff of four individuals will have to be able to multi-task and handle a variety of projects simultaneously. **Key Decision Makers:** DOE regulators Partnering agencies **Educators NCRS** County Commissioners County Landowners 5 - Year Plan Annual Budget Needs Salaries District Manager 36,000 25,000 Financial Manager I & E Coordinator 30,000 **Resource Scientist** 32,000 Agronomy/Ag Tech 25,000 Resource Tech (2) 44,000 Total \$192,000 **Benefits** 67,200 District Equip 24,000 Office Supplies 18,000 Rent / Utilities 12,000 Vehicle 12,000 Training 10,000 Misc Expenses 20,000 **Operating Annual Total** \$355,200 Programs/Cost-Share 400,000 **Grand Total** \$755,200

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Priority Actions – 12 Months

	Begin	End Date
Action	Date	
❖ Establish a technical advisory group for Air Quality	6/2005	10/2005
 Establish a baseline map of habitat types and conditions 	6/2005	12/2005
 Establish a technical advisory group composed of public and agency personnel 	7/2005	12/2005
❖ Work to secure funding to monitor and improve the water quality in those streams and		
rivers that are of concern.	6/2005	6/2006
❖ Publish an on-line newsletter quarterly		
❖ Work to secure funding to implement water conservation practices throughout the county.	6/2005	12/2006
❖ Implementation of RCW 89.08.400 to create an assessment	6/2005	6/2006
❖ Secure financial resources so that human resources can provide desired results		
	6/2005	6/2006
	6/2005	6/2006